



When the Church sings the **Easter Proclamation**, a sacred shiver runs through the faithful. This is the night when everything changes—the night when light triumphs over darkness, and death is defeated forever. But what is the Easter Proclamation? Where does it come from? Why is it still so relevant today? Join us as we explore the history, symbolism, and theological richness of one of the most sublime chants of the Roman liturgy.

1. What Is the Easter Proclamation?

The **Easter Proclamation** (or **Exsultet**, in Latin) is an ancient hymn sung during the **Easter Vigil**, the holiest night of the Christian calendar. It is chanted at the beginning of the celebration, immediately after the blessing of the new fire and the procession with the **Paschal Candle**. This hymn of praise proclaims the **Resurrection of Christ** and exults in the victory of light over darkness.

Traditionally, it is sung by a deacon, but in his absence, a priest or even a layperson may chant it. Its theological depth and poetic beauty make it one of the most sublime pieces of the Roman liturgy.

2. The Origin and History of the Easter Proclamation

The Easter Proclamation has a history that dates back to the early centuries of Christianity. While its current form originates around the **7th century**, its roots go back to the earliest hymns of the Church.

a) Jewish Influences

The **Easter Vigil** has deep connections with the Jewish Passover. During the **Seder meal**, the people of Israel recite blessings and hymns recounting their liberation from Egypt. The Easter Proclamation follows this tradition by announcing the liberation of Christians from sin and death through Christ.

b) Development in Christian Liturgy

The first references to an **Easter proclamation** appear in the **4th century**. St. Augustine



mentions a paschal “proclamation” in his writings. The Latin version we know today comes from the **Roman liturgy of the 7th century**, with influences from the **Ambrosian rite** of Milan.

The text has undergone minor modifications over the centuries, but its essence has remained intact. By the **12th century**, during the pontificate of Pope **Paschal II**, it was officially established as part of the Easter liturgy.

3. Analysis of the Easter Proclamation Text

The Easter Proclamation is a **liturgical poem** structured as a mixture of **proclamation, praise, and supplication**. Let’s examine its main parts:

a) Invitation to Rejoice

The hymn begins with a call to universal joy:

“*Exsultet iam angelica turba cælorum!*”
 (“*Let the angelic hosts of heaven exult!*”)

Here, we are invited to join the joy of the **angels** and the **whole Church** on earth. This is the victorious cry after Christ’s Passion.

b) Praise for the Light of Christ

The hymn then refers to the **Paschal Candle**, a symbol of the **Risen Christ, Light of the World**:

“*Lumen Christi gloriosi dissipet tenebras cordis et mentis*”
 (“*May the glorious light of Christ dispel the darkness of heart and mind*”)



This is a key moment, as the Church contemplates how the **light of Christ conquers the darkness of sin**.

c) The Night of Salvation

One of the most famous passages of the Easter Proclamation exalts the **“Blessed Night”**:

“O truly blessed night, when darkness is banished and innocence is restored to the fallen!”

This night is not just another night in history—it is **the night of Redemption**, when Christ rises from the dead and opens the gates of heaven.

d) The Mystery of the “Felix Culpa”

One of the most striking moments in the Easter Proclamation is when it declares:

“O happy fault, that earned for us so great a Redeemer!”

Here, the Church teaches that original sin, though tragic, allowed for the coming of Christ and our redemption. This is a **profound and paradoxical concept**, revealing God’s immense love for humanity.

4. The Easter Proclamation Today: Its Meaning for Our Lives

The Easter Proclamation is not just an ancient hymn—it is a proclamation that still resonates with power today. What does it tell us in our time?

a) The Light of Christ in a Dark World

We live in an age of **spiritual and moral crisis**. Many experience despair, wars, injustices,



and a loss of meaning. But the Easter Proclamation reminds us that **the light of Christ still shines** and that **darkness will never overcome it**.

b) A Call to Conversion

The Easter Proclamation is not just an announcement—it is an **invitation: Christ is risen, but are we?** Do we live as resurrected people? Do we allow the **light of Christ** to transform our lives?

c) A Faith That Is Celebrated

Easter is not just a date on the calendar—it is the very heart of our faith. The Easter Proclamation calls us to **live the joy of the Resurrection every day** and to share this **Good News** with the world.

5. Conclusion: May the Light of Christ Illuminate Our Lives

The Easter Proclamation is much more than a **liturgical chant**. It is a **cry of victory**, a **proclamation of hope**, and an **invitation to live the Resurrection**.

The **Easter Vigil** is the night when history changed forever. May this hymn remind us, year after year, that **Christ has conquered death and calls us to live as children of light**.

When we hear it again during the Easter Vigil, may it not only reach our ears but also our hearts. **Christ is risen! Truly, He is risen! Alleluia!**